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ABSTRACT

The reference circular provides information on approximately 50 reading and writing aids intended for physically or visually handicapped individuals. Described are low vision aids, aids for holding a book or turning pages, aids for reading in bed, handwriting aids, typewriters and accessories, braille writing equipment, sound reproducers, and aids to the mailing of letters and books. Examples of aids listed are hand held magnifiers, closed circuit television, mouthsticks, prism glasses, signature guides, typewriters, and cassette mailing containers. Listings usually include item name, a brief nonevaluative description, manufacturing company or companies, order numbers, and prices. Addresses of approximately 50 suppliers are included. (DB)

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REFERENCE CIRCULAR

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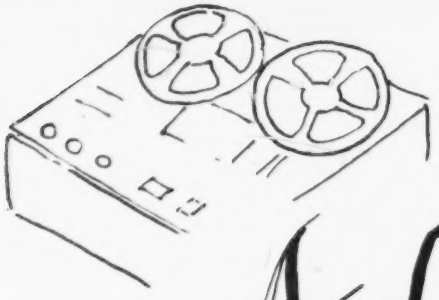
September 1972



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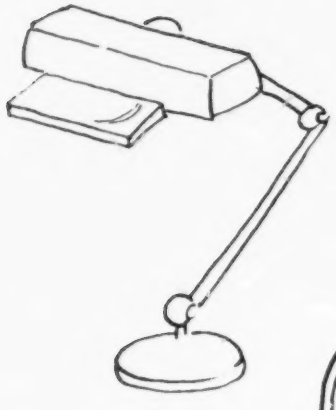

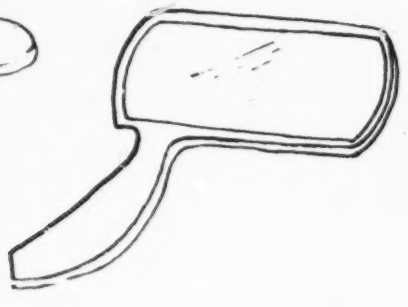

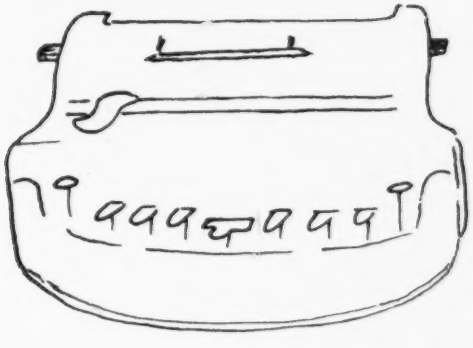

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INTRODUCTION

Reading and writing aids available for handicapped persons include complex devices specifically designed to help a person with a particular impairment as well as simple devices which can be purchased in local stores. In this reference circular we have attempted to describe a variety of such aids and to list a few of the sources from which each is available. Order numbers and prices are given for most items, but for more detailed descriptions and current prices and order information please write to the sources listed or check with a local store or dealer.

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LOW VISION AIDS

Low vision clinics, ophthalmologists and optometrists can help an individual find the kind of reading aid most helpful for his particular vision impairment. A directory of low vision clinics in the United States can be obtained from the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, 79 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016. Information on low vision services and resources is also available from the American Optometric Association, 7000 Chippewa Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63119.

Magnifiers

The variety of magnifiers available for use by partially sighted persons includes hand-held magnifiers, magnifying lenses mounted on stands and loupes which can be worn over a person's regular eyeglasses. Some of the magnifiers have built-in lights to increase the illumination of the reading surface. Others are specially designed for persons with cataracts. Many styles are available for less than $10.00. A comprehensive discussion of the different kinds of magnifiers and their uses is found in the manual, Recommended Aids for the Partially Sighted, by Dr. Louise Sloan, revised second edition, New York, National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, 1971, $2.00. The following sources sell a full range of magnifiers:

American Thermo-Ware Company
Apex Specialties Co.
Bausch and Lomb
Bernell Corporation
Edmund Scientific Co.
Edroy Products Company, Inc.
Keeler Optical Products, Inc.
New York Association for the Blind, Low Vision Services

Hand-held, illuminated magnifiers:

Covington Plating Works (Adisco, $8.95 and up)
Miles Kimball (5131-3, $7.95)
Stocker and Yale ($21.50 and up)

Table model, illuminated magnifiers:

EdnaLite Corporation ($140.00 and up)
Mico Instrument Company ($38.00 and up)
Precision Equipment Co. ($24.95)
Stocker and Yale ($28.50 and up)

A glare shield

For some types of vision problems, such as incipient cataracts, the glare from the white paper makes reading difficult. A black paper or cardboard shield with a reading slit large enough to expose a single line of print can easily be made or can be ordered from:

Superior Optical Company (C.F. Prentice Typoscope, 10/$1.50)

Optical enlarger

The Optiscope enlarges and projects printed matter onto a built-in viewing screen.

Opaque Systems, Ltd. ($295.00)

Closed circuit television

A small camera and a special monitor (or a regular television screen) magnify printed material electronically. Black-white contrast can be intensified and negative images (white on black) can be used to reduce glare.

Apollo Lasers, Inc. (Javelin, $1275.00 and up, lease and time payment plans available)
Visualtek ($1195.00 and up, rental and purchase option plans available) also distributed by Science for the Blind.
Warner Equipment Corp. (G.E. Electronic Magnifier, Model W-721, $1525.00 basic price)

A tactile reading machine

The Optacon converts the image of a printed letter into a tactile image which can be felt with the finger.

Telesensory Systems, Inc. ($5,000.00)

AIDS FOR HOLDING A BOOK OR TURNING PAGES

Book stands

Stands which hold books in an upright position and keep the pages flat for easier viewing are an aid to someone with partial sight or limited use of the hands.

American Printing House for the Blind (1-0322, $25.00; Gore Reading Stand, 1-0321, $27.50; Schafer Reading Stand, 1-0323, $40.00)
Fashion-ABLE (G350, $1.28)
National Aid to the Visually Handicapped ($1.50 donation)
Northfield Specialties (Study Board, $3.95; $3.00 with a statement that the Study Board will be used by a person with a handicap.)
Fred Sammons, Inc. (BK 6042, $1.25)
Shalik's Rehab Aids (H311, $2.50)

Wheelchair lap trays

Lap trays make a good working surface for either reading or writing and may be more convenient than a regular table.

Hausmann Industries (various models, $16.25 and up)
G.E. Miller, Inc. (various models, $11.50-$33.00; also wheelchair tables, $19.00-$195.00)
Fred Sammons, Inc. (various models, $6.50-$33.00)

Page turners, homemade

Simple devices, such as the eraser end of a pencil, a rubber thumb or a finger moistener, can help persons with limited manual dexterity turn pages of books and magazines. These are all available at stationery and office supply stores.

Mouthsticks

An article by Donna McGwinn describing the construction and uses of this versatile tool appears in the September-October 1972 issue of Talking Book Topics. Basically, a mouthstick consists of a mouth piece, a stick and a tip. A rubber tip makes a good page turner and other kinds of tips can be used for writing, typing, dialing a telephone or accomplishing other tasks. Mouthsticks are not commercially available. Further suggestions for making them are given in the book, Assistive Devices for the Handicapped, by Charlot Rosenberg, Minneapolis, the American Rehabilitation Foundation, 1968, pages 16 and 96-97.

Headwands

Consisting of a sturdy, padded head band, an extension wand and a tip, a headwand can serve the same purposes as a mouthstick. The headwand is described in detail in the book, Assistive Devices for the Handicapped, by Charlot Rosenberg, Minneapolis, the American Rehabilitation Foundation, 1968, pages 15 and 90-95.

Page turners, mechanical

Mechanical page turners can be operated by the chin, an elbow, a toe or any movable part of the body. They can be placed on an overbed table, worktable or wheelchair table or lap tray.

Lakeland Tool Works and Products ($236.50)
G.E. Miller (Lakeland Page Turner, GE 3363; Turn-a-Page, GE 3360, $269.00)
Fred Sammons, Inc. (Touch Turner, BK-4045, $159.00; reversible model, BK-4052, $284.00)
Touch Turner Company (Model C, $125.00; reversible model CR, $250.00)

READING IN BED

Prism glasses

Prism glasses which refract light enable a person lying flat on his back to read a book held in an upright position on his chest. They also make it easier to watch television. Most models can be worn over a regular pair of eyeglasses.

Bernell Corporation (Bedspecs, $15.00)
G.E. Miller (Relaxa-Specs, GE3445, $14.95)
Shalik's Rehab Aids (Bedspec, H306, $24.00)

Mirror glasses

Mirror glasses serve the same purpose as prism glasses. Two mirrors are used to change the angle of vision.

Bernell Corporation (Tele-Vue, $3.00)
Edmund Scientific Company (Tele-Vue, No. 70,668, $3.00)
Mars Optical Company (Reclino-specs, $5.95)

Bed tables

A tilted table with clips for holding books in an open position and legs to stand on the bed makes reading easier for someone who can sit in a semi-reclined or upright position. It can also be used to hold paper for writing.

Fashion-ABLE (G120, $17.98)
Replogle Globes, Inc. (Model 20, $12.95)

An overbed table can be used for writing or for reading

in conjunction with the book stands and page turners described in previous sections.

G.E. Miller (various models, $29.95 and up)

Book holder

A light-weight frame which stands on the bed and holds a book directly overhead or at any angle comfortable for reading is available from:

Fashion-ABLE (Book Butler, G101, $17.49)
G.E. Miller (Book Butler, GE3362, $16.75)
Shalik's Rehab Aids (Invalid Book Holder, H303, $24.00)

HANDWRITING AIDS

Bold line writing paper

Paper with dark, heavily ruled lines helps a partially sighted person keep his writing straight and evenly spaced.

American Printing House for the Blind (lines 7/16" apart, 1-0470, or lines 9/16" apart, 1-0471, $.60/lb.)

Embossed writing paper

Writing paper is also available with embossed ruled lines, or ridges, which can be felt by the hand of a sightless writer.

American Printing House for the Blind (1-0456, 165 sheets/$1.50)
NU-VU Products Company (No. 210, 100 sheets/$2.50 plus $1.00 handling charge)

Grooved writing card

A grooved writing card can be placed under an ordinary sheet of paper. The grooves are felt through the paper by a sightless person who writes a line within each groove.

Howe Press (8 1/2" x 11" card, $.30)

Script guide

A script guide is used on top of an ordinary piece of paper to guide a sightless writer. A simple one could be made of light-weight cardboard by cutting out slots in horizontal rows, one for each line of writing. A more sturdy and versatile script guide is available from:

American Foundation for the Blind (Marks Script Guide, WS 203, $8.95)

Signature guides

A signature guide is used by a blind person for signing checks, letters and other papers.

American Foundation for the Blind (WS 202, $.65)
American Printing House for the Blind (1-0353, $1.60)
Howe Press ($.35)

Plastic writing sheets

Raised characters which can be traced with a finger are made by writing on special plastic sheets with an ordinary ball-point pen.

American Foundation for the Blind (WC 195, 70 sheets/$2.75; Raised Line Drawing Kit, WS 194, $8.75)
NU-VU Products Company (No. 300, 100 sheets/$3.50 or No. 310 with embossed, ruled lines, 100 sheets/$5.50. $1.00 handling charge on all orders)

Paper holders

An ordinary clipboard will hold a piece of paper steady for writing. For someone who cannot handle a spring clip, a magnet will hold the paper in place on a metal writing board.

Fashion-ABLE (Clip Cadie, G354, $5.49)

Penholders

See discussion on mouthsticks and headwands on page 4.

In some cases, persons with impaired grasp can use a pen or pencil more easily if the handle is built up by winding a rubber band or tape around it or by encasing the handle in rubber tubing or plastic foam. Pen or pencil holders specially designed to fit the palm are available from:

Fashion-ABLE (G422, $1.68)
Fred Sammons, Inc. (several styles, including models which are fastened onto the hand, $1.00-$4.80)
Shalik's Rehab Aids (Rite-All, A309, $3.95; Riting Rocket, H309, $5.95)

TYPEWRITERS AND ACCESSORIES

Portable typewriters

Matilda Ziegler Magazine for the Blind is a dealer for Remington portable typewriters and will sell them to legally blind persons at wholesale prices.

Large type typewriters

Many typewriter manufacturers offer large size type as an optional feature on their office typewriter models. Check with your local typewriter dealer for more information on makes of typewriters and styles of large type available.

IBM (Executive; Model D, $490.00)
Olivetti Underwood (Editor 3, $395.00)
Remington Rand (Model 26, $537.00)
Royal (560 Series, $400.00)
Smith-Corona (Model 280, $285.00)

Copy holder and magnifier

A stand which holds the copy and has a bar magnifier for easier reading of the material to be typed is available from:

Rite-Line Corporation ($27.95)

Closed circuit television accessory

A typewriter accessory for use with the Visualtek camera system (see page 3) enables a partially sighted typist to read what he has typed while it is still in place in the typewriter.

Visualtek (Typewriter accessory, $75.00)

Braille verifier

Used in conjunction with a typewriter, a braille verifier produces braille copy on paper tape as the regular copy is being typed. This braille copy can be proofread by the blind typist and saved for his future reference.

EdnaLite Corporation (Phylab Brailler, will soon be available)

Triformation Systems, Inc. (BD-3 Braille Terminal, can also be used with a computer terminal, a teletype and related equipment, $1850.00)

Spastic hood

A specially designed platform above the keys allows typists with limited dexterity to effectively operate an electric typewriter.

Royal Typewriter Company (Spastic hood for use with Royal Typewriters, Series 560, $30.00)

Keyboard device for the quadriplegic

VISTA, the Visual Instant Scanning Typewriter Adapter, enables a quadriplegic or anyone with a severe motor control handicap to use an IBM Selectric Typewriter, Model 721. A panel with electro-magnetic plungers fits over the typewriter's keyboard. As a scanner indicates the desired character, the operator depresses a switch and the typewriter key is automatically struck.

Bush Electric Company ($895.00)

BRAILLE WRITING EQUIPMENT

Braille paper

Available in two weights and several sizes, braille writing paper can be purchased in quantity from:

The American Printing House for the Blind
Howe Press

Slates and styluses

A braille slate is a frame made of metal or plastic which is used as a guide for punching braille dots with a stylus. Since the raised dot then appears on the back side of the paper, the braille characters must be punched in reverse, or from right to left. Slates come in various sizes and models from pocket-size to desk models, at prices ranging from $.50 to $5.25.

The American Printing House for the Blind
Howe Press

A micro-braille slate for miniature dots is available from the American Foundation for the Blind and a jumbo braille slate for extra large dots can be purchased from Howe Press.

Interpoint slate

An interpoint slate which permits writing on both sides of the paper is available from:

American Printing House for the Blind (28-cell guide, 1-0007, $3.00; 19-cell guide, 1-0011, $2.50)

Upward writing slate

An upward writing braille slate makes it possible to write braille from left to right instead of backwards as on an ordinary braille slate.

Orbit Products Co., Inc. ($3.00)

Braillewriters

A braillewriter is a mechanical device which has six keys, one for each of the dots in a braille cell. A braille character is embossed by pressing the correct combination of keys.

American Printing House for the Blind (Lavender Braillewriter, $65.00)
Howe Press (Perkins Brailler, $115.00; jumbo dot model, $185.00)
Lions Clubs (Banks Pocket Braille Writer, distributed by local Lions Clubs, for further information contact the Boston-Parkway Lions Club)
Royal National Institute for the Blind (Stainsby Braille Writer, approximately $55.00)

Braille shorthand machine

A shorthand machine which writes braille onto paper tape is available from:

Royal National Institute for the Blind (approximately $88.00)

Braille typewriter

An electric typewriter with an ordinary keyboard which embosses braille letters instead of typing print letters is available from:

IBM ($490.00; $375.00 to educational institutions; leasing plan also available)

Braille duplicating equipment

By the application of heat and creation of a vacuum, a plastic sheet is made to conform to a brailled or embossed page. Although only one such copy can be made at a time, the master is not damaged and the process can be repeated for as many copies as are required.

American Thermoform Corporation (ThermoForm 55, $640.00; Brailon plastic sheets, various sizes and prices)

SOUND REPRODUCERS

Phonographs

The Library of Congress Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped provides talking book machines on free loan to persons who are unable to read conventional print because of a physical or visual disability. Talking book machines are phonographs specially adapted for the free library service of recorded books and magazines and play at 16 2/3 and 8 1/3 revolutions per minute. No commercially available phonograph has the latter speed.

American Printing House for the Blind
(Model TR-1000, Cat. No. 1-0096: 33 1/3, 16 2/3, 8 1/3 rpm, $90.00.
Model VTR-5000, Cat. No. 1-0097: variable speed control, $125.00.
Accessories: headphone, $3.50; 6-foot extension cord, $1.75; diamond needle cartridge, $3.75)
Science for the Blind
(Modified Singer HE 2205: 16 2/3 and 8 1/3 rpm, battery or AC, $40.00)

Cassette recorders and players

In recent years, the Library of Congress Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has been augmenting its talking book service with cassette books and cassette players. The modified cassette players provided on free loan to eligible individuals play at 1 7/8 and 15/16 inches per second.

Because this is a relatively new program, cassette equipment is in limited supply and is available on a priority basis. While a cassette player serves as a reading machine, a cassette recorder can be used to take notes and send messages as well. State vocational rehabilitation agencies will in some cases supply a handicapped person with a cassette or open-reel tape recorder for educational or professional use. Before purchasing a cassette recorder you may wish to read the following two articles: "Cassette Recorders" in Consumer Bulletin, vol. 54, pages 31-37, January 1971 and "Cassette Tape Recorders" in Consumer Reports, vol. 36, pages 279-283, May, 1971.

American Printing House for the Blind
(Modified G.E. cassette recorder, Cat. No. 1-0701: 1 7/8 and 15/16 ips and variable speed control, battery or AC operated, tone indexing, tactile markings on control buttons $72.50)
Science for the Blind
(Craig 2603: recorder, AC or battery, $48.00. Accessories: rechargeable battery pack, $18.00; plastic carrying case, $5.50.
Craig 2605: miniature portable recorder, uses standard cassette, AA batteries, $95.00; rechargeable battery pack, $18.00.
Craig 2801: playback only, not a recorder, portable, earphone and AC adapter jacks, $20.00)

Cassette tapes, blank

American Foundation for the Blind (MC 341, C-90, 3/$4.25)
Tapes for the Blind, Inc. (C-30, $.65; C-60, $.90; C-90, $1.15)

Open-reel tape recorders and players

Open-reel, or reel-to-reel, tape recorders are available commercially as well as from the following sources. An article of interest to someone who is thinking about buying a tape recorder is "How to Select a Reel-to-Reel Tape Recorder," by Julian D. Hirsch in Popular Electronics, March 1972, volume 1, number 3, pages 47-50.

American Printing House for the Blind
(Modified Sony 105, Cat. No. 1-0091: 7 1/2, 3 3/4, 1 7/8 ips, 4-track, 7-inch reel, $169.95; Cat. No. 1-0092 with variable speed control, $189.95. Accessories: self-threading reel, $1.50; headphone adaptor plug, $1.00)

Science for the Blind
(Lafayette RK-142: 7 1/2 and 3 3/4 ips, 2-track, $70.00.
Craig 2102 (212): 3 3/4 and 1 7/8 ips, 2-track, battery or AC, 3 1/4-inch reel, $40.00.
Viking tape player: not a recorder, 3 3/4 and 1 7/8 ips, 4-track, 7-inch reel, $80.00)

Open-reel tapes, blank

Tapes for the Blind, Inc. (3-, 5- and 7-inch reels, $.25-$1.00)

THE MAILING OF LETTERS AND BOOKS

According to Public Law 91-375, reading matter in large type, raised characters or recorded form and the paper, tapes and other material and equipment for the production of such reading matter may be mailed free of postage if the reading matter is for the use of persons who cannot use conventionally printed material because of a physical or visual impairment. Unsealed letters sent by such handicapped persons are also postage-free if they are in raised characters, large type or recorded form and are clearly marked in the upper right-hand corner of the address area, "Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped."

Rubber stamps and ink pads

Rubber stamps for return addresses and for marking letters and books as "Free Matter for the Blind and Handicapped" are available from:

Dialogue

("Free Matter for the Blind and Handicapped," $1.10.
Addresses: 3 lines, $2.25; 4 lines, $2.75.
Black ink pad, $.85)

Mailing containers

Mailing containers made of fibre-board riveted together by steel rivets and equipped with web straps, large address holders and a printed label reading, "Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped," are available for braille books, talking book records and 7-inch tape reels. Heavy cardboard tubes for mailing up to four braille sheets are also available:

American Printing House for the Blind (various sizes and prices)

Heavy cardboard mailing containers for standard cassette tapes and 5- and 7-inch tape reels are available:

Dialogue (Cassette, 10/$1.00; 5-inch reel, 10/$1.50; 7-inch reel, 10/$2.50.)

ADDRESSES OF SOURCES

American Foundation for the Blind
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011
(Catalog of "Aids and Appliances," also available in braille)

American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40206
("General Catalog of Tangible Apparatus")

American Thermoform Corporation
8640 East Slauson Avenue
Pico Rivera, California 90660

American Thermo-Ware Company
16 Warren Street
New York, New York 10007

Apex Specialties Company
1115 Douglas Avenue
Providence, R.I. 02904

Apollo Lasers, Inc.
5556 W. Washington Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90016

Bausch & Lomb, Inc.
Rochester, New York 14602

Bernell Corporation
316 South Eddy Street
South Bend, Indiana 46617

Boston-Parkway Lions Club
749 South Street
Roslindale, Mass. 02131
(Check with your local Lions Clubs)

Bush Electric Company
1245 Folsom Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94103

Covington Plating Works, Inc.
330 Pike Street
Covington, Kentucky 41011

Dialogue
3100 Oak Park Avenue
Berwyn, Illinois 60402

Edmund Scientific Company
555 Edscorp Building
Barrington, New Jersey 08007

EdnaLite Corporation
200 North Water Street
Peekskill, New York 10566

Edroy Products Company, Inc.
130 West 29th Street
New York, New York 10001

Fashion-ABLE
Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553
(Catalog of "Self-help Aids for Independent Living")

Hausmann Industries
130 Union Street
Northvale, New Jersey 07647

Howe Press of the Perkins School for the Blind
Watertown, Mass. 02172
("Price List of Appliances and Mathematical Aids, Games and Braille Paper," also available in braille)

IBM
Office Products Division
Parsons Pond Drive
Franklin Lakes, N.J. 07417
(See your telephone directory for a local dealer)

Keeler Optical Products, Inc.
456 Parkway
Lawrence Park Industrial Dist.
Broomall, Pennsylvania 19008

Miles Kimball
41 West Eighth Avenue
Kimball Building
Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901

Lakeland Tool Works and Products
Post Office Box 1224
21 Birnamwood Drive
Burnsville, Minnesota 55378

Lions Clubs
(See your telephone directory for your local Lions Club. For further information on the Banks Pocket Braille Writer contact the Boston-Parkway Lions Club)

Mars Optical Company
49 Bromfield Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

The Matilda Ziegler Magazine for the Blind
20 West 17th Street
New York, New York 10011

Mico Instrument Company
80 Trowbridge Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

G.E. Miller, Inc.
484 South Broadway
Yonkers, New York 10705

National Aid to Visually Handicapped
3201 Balboa Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94121

New York Association for the Blind
Low Vision Services
111 East 59th Street
New York, New York 10022
("Catalog of Optical Aids" $2.00)

Northfield Specialties Company
215 Madison Street
Northfield, Minnesota 55057

NU-VU Products Company
45 East Lockwood
Webster Groves, Missouri 63119

Olivetti Underwood Corp.
33rd Street and Park Avenue
New York, New York 10016
(See your telephone directory for a local dealer)

Opaque Systems, Ltd.
175 Fulton Avenue
Hempstead, New York 11550

Orbit Products Company, Inc.
Route 1, Post Office Box 76
Villa Ridge, Missouri 63089

Precision Equipment Company
4401 N. Ravenswood Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60640

Remington Rand Office Machines
1051 South Main Street
Elmira, New York 14904
(See your telephone directory for a local dealer)

Replogle Globes, Inc.
1901 N. Narragansett Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60639

Rite-Line Corporation
172 Rollins Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Royal National Institute for the Blind
224 Great Portland Street
London W1N 6AA
ENGLAND

Royal Typewriter Company
150 New Park Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(See your telephone directory for a local dealer)

Fred Sammons, Inc.
Box 32
Brookfield, Illinois 60513
(Catalog of "Be OK, Self-help Aids")

Science for the Blind
221 Rock Hill Road
Bala-Cynwyd, Penn. 19004

Shalik's Rehab Aids
Box 826
Miami, Florida 33143

Smith-Corona Office Typewriters
410 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10022
(See your telephone directory for a local dealer)

Stocker and Yale, Inc.
Route #128 and Brimbal Avenue
Beverly, Massachusetts 01915

Superior Optical Company
1500 South Hope Street
Los Angeles, Calif. 90015

Tapes for the Blind, Inc.
12007 S. Paramount Blvd.
Suite 2
Downey, California 90242

Telesensory Systems, Inc.
2626 Hanover Street
Palo Alto, Calif. 94304

Touch Turner Company
1808 Tenth Avenue East
Seattle, Washington 98102

Triformation Systems, Inc.
39 Yosemite Circle
West Henrietta, N.Y. 14586

Visualtek
1901 Olympic Boulevard
Santa Monica, Calif. 90404

Warner Equipment Corporation
24001 Telegraph Road
Southfield, Michigan 48075

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Washington, D.C. 20542